

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT



Application No. 14000, of 1337 Connecticut Avenue, Inc., pursuant to Sub-section 8207.2 of the Zoning Regulations, for special exceptions under Paragraph 4104.44 to allow an addition to an SP office building and under Sub-section 7203.1 to allow a reduction in the number of parking required for an office use in a C-3-C/SP-1 District at premises 1337 Connecticut Avenue, N.W., (Square 137, Lot 55).

HEARING DATE: August 3, 1983

DECISION DATE: August 3, 1983 (Bench Decision)

FINDINGS OF FACT:

1. The subject site is a through lot with frontage on the east side of Connecticut Avenue between Dupont Circle and N Street, N.W. and frontage on the west side of 18th Street between Massachusetts Avenue and N Street, N.W. The site is known as premises 1337 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. The site is in the C-3-C and SP-1 Districts.

2. The site is irregular in shape and contains approximately 7,799 square feet of land. The site has approximately forty-five feet of frontage on Connecticut Avenue and approximately fifty-three feet of frontage on 18th Street. It is improved with a four-story office building constructed in 1952 which is presently occupied by a branch of the National Bank of Washington. The building fronts directly on Connecticut Avenue and the rear portion is used as a parking lot containing six spaces with access from 18th Street.

3. The zoning boundary line runs in a north/south direction dividing the site into a western and an eastern portion. The eastern portion of the site is in the SP-1 District along 18th Street and contains approximately 3,035 square feet. The western portion is in the C-3-C District along Connecticut Avenue and contains approximately 4,764 square feet.

4. The area surrounding the site is developed primarily with office uses. To the south of the site along 18th Street, the entire block is developed with offices. To the north, on the same side of the street, are the Emerson Institute and other office uses. Across 18th Street is the

Palladium apartment building and other buildings containing SP type uses.

5. The subject square contains ninety foot office buildings, restaurants, various retail uses and a school. The site is directly across from the Machinists Planned Unit Development and the Dupont Circle Building, both of which are planned or are presently over 100 feet in height.

6. The applicant proposes to construct a five-story addition to the existing building in the SP-1 portion of the site. One-story would be constructed over the existing building on the C-3-C portion of the site as a matter-of-right. The five-story addition on the SP-1 portion of the site would contain a parking garage with eight parking spaces accessible from 18th Street. The five-story addition requires Board approval.

7. The site is located within the boundaries of the Dupont Circle and Massachusetts Avenue Historic Districts. The proposed addition has been reviewed by the Historic Preservation Review Board and has received conceptual approval.

8. Careful attention has been given to both the size and design of the proposed addition. In accordance with suggestions made by the Historic Preservation Review Board, numerous design changes have been implemented. The building was stepped-back above the existing cornice lines on both Connecticut Avenue and 18th Street. The building was divided into three vertical masses on 18th Street to retain the scale of the adjoining townhouses. A projecting entrance way and a window bay were used to repeat the existing projection on 18th Street. Brick and stone building materials were used to reflect the existing materials on 18th Street. Sandstone was used on the Connecticut Avenue addition and new entrance for the same reason. The result of this design review process is a building that is both sensitive to and in harmony with the scale and design of existing structures in the area.

9. Only one level of parking can be provided on the site. An addition to the existing building constructed in 1952 contains a concrete and steel vault that also occupies the basement level. This structure creates a barrier that limits any at-grade or below-grade parking area to the size of the present parking lot. To provide more than one level of parking below grade would require a ramp that would virtually consume all of the available lot area.

10. The site is within 300 feet of the south entrance to the Dupont Circle Metrorail station and within walking distance of the Farragut Square Metrorail Station entrance.

Metrobus service provides numerous bus routes which serve the area.

11. The National Bank of Washington, which presently leases two floors of the existing building, employs twenty-one people at this branch location. Of the twenty-one employees, eighteen commute by Metro or by bus. Two officers drive to work and one person arrives by carpool. Most of the bank's customers walk to the bank from neighboring apartments and businesses. The remainder of the existing building was occupied until June, 1983, by the Population Reference Bureau. This organization averaged twenty to twenty-seven employees, all of whom commuted to work by Metro. The applicant anticipates that this high level of Metro usage will continue.

12. There will be approximately 17,000 square feet of new office space in the addition that will accommodate approximately forty-nine workers. The total number of workers in the building will be ninety-three.

13. The National Bank of Washington will continue to lease two floors in the existing building. The remaining floors will be leased to commercial tenants. The SP-1 office addition will be leased to professional office users in accordance with the Zoning Regulations.

14. The applicant's traffic expert testified that the additional peak hour traffic that would be generated by the forty-nine employees in the new addition would be four trips. Such trips would have a negligible effect on adjacent streets. The Board concurs with the findings of the traffic expert.

15. The proposed building addition would require ten parking spaces under the provisions of the Zoning Regulations, whereas only eight parking spaces are being provided in the proposed garage. The Board's approval is therefore required to reduce the amount of parking by two spaces as provided for in the special exception provisions of Sub-section 7203.1.

16. The site is reasonably convenient to public and private parking establishments although the District's policy has been to discourage public parking in the vicinity of major Metro Stations, such as Dupont Circle. On-street parking is also available. For all these reasons, the Board finds that the proposed reduction in parking is in furtherance of the District's goal to limit parking in the vicinity of Metro Station areas and that the eight spaces will be adequate for users of the proposed building.

17. The Office of Planning, by report received July 27, 1983, recommended that the application be approved. In

the Office of Planning's opinion, the proposed development would be in harmony with the use, height, bulk and design of the existing uses and structures in the immediate vicinity of the site and is not likely to create dangerous or other objectionable traffic conditions in the area. The Office of Planning further reported that the proposed reduction in the number of parking spaces is minor, and is not likely to create objectionable traffic conditions. The Board concurs with the recommendation of the Office of Planning.

18. Four letters in support of the application were received into the record from owners of the following properties: 1301-1317, 1319, 1321, 1323 and 1341 Connecticut Avenue, N.W. and 1800 Massachusetts Avenue, N. W.

19. One letter in opposition to the application was received into the record from a resident of 1325 18th Street, N.W.

20. Two persons testified at the public hearing in opposition to the application. A unit owner in the Palladium condominium building expressed concerns about the noise during construction but had no objection to the use, height, bulk or design of the proposed building. A representative of the Residential Action Coalition opposed the use of the property for office purposes, the bulk of the building in the SP-1 portion of the site and the requested reduction in the parking requirement. In addressing the concerns of the opposition, the Board finds that the height, bulk and design of the proposed building are compatible with adjacent structures, many of which are constructed to greater height and bulk than that proposed, that the use is in keeping with the surrounding mix of office and retail uses, and that the requested reduction in the parking requirement would have no adverse impact given the location and proposed use of the subject property.

21. Advisory Neighborhood Commission 2B by letter dated July 25, 1983, recommended approval of the application. No reasons were stated. Accordingly, there are no issues and concerns to which the Board can give "great weight."

CONCLUSIONS OF LAW AND OPINION:

Based on the above Findings of Fact and the evidence of record, the Board concludes that the applicant is requesting special exception relief to permit construction of an SP-1 office building and to permit a reduction in the amount of parking provided. In reviewing an application for special exceptions under Paragraph 4101.44 and Sub-section 7203.2, the Board is limited to a determination of whether the applicant has complied with the requirements of these sections. The Board concludes that the applicant has met its burden of proof. The Board is of the opinion that

the proposed development would be in harmony with the use, height, bulk and design of the existing uses and structures in the immediate vicinity of the site and is not likely to create dangerous or other objectionable traffic conditions in the area. The Board notes that the application has been reviewed and approved in concept by the Historic Preservation Review Board.

The Board further concludes that the proposed reduction in the number of parking spaces is minor and is not likely to create objectionable traffic or other conditions.

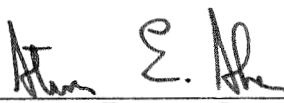
The Board is of the opinion that the granting of this application will not adversely affect neighboring property and will be in harmony with the intent and purpose of the Zoning Regulations and Map. It is therefore ORDERED that the application is hereby GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

1. There shall be no sign advertising the bank use on any portion of the building fronting on 18th Street, N.W.
2. There shall be no automatic teller machines located on the SP-1 portion of the property.
3. On-site parking shall be restricted to the tenants of the building. There shall be no on-site parking provided for customers of the bank.

VOTE: 5-0 (Douglas J. Patton, Lindsley Williams, Carrie L. Thornhill, William F. McIntosh and Charles R. Norris to grant).

BY ORDER OF THE D.C. BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT

ATTESTED BY:


STEVEN E. SHER
Executive Director

FINAL DATE OF ORDER: OCT -4 1983

UNDER SUB-SECTION 8204.3 OF THE ZONING REGULATIONS, "NO DECISION OR ORDER OF THE BOARD SHALL TAKE EFFECT UNTIL TEN DAYS AFTER HAVING BECOME FINAL PURSUANT TO THE SUPPLEMENTAL RULES OF PRACTICE AND PROCEDURE BEFORE THE BOARD OF ZONING ADJUSTMENT."

THIS ORDER OF THE BOARD IS VALID FOR A PERIOD OF SIX MONTHS AFTER THE EFFECTIVE DATE OF THIS ORDER, UNLESS WITHIN SUCH PERIOD AN APPLICATION FOR A BUILDING PERMIT OR CERTIFICATE

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OF OCCUPANCY IS FILED WITH THE DEPARTMENT OF CONSUMER AND
REGULATORY AFFAIRS.

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